

Leon County Board of County Commissioners



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Leon County Government is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the outstanding quality of life which has made our community a desirable place to live, work and raise our children. Through the provisions of cost effective superior services, County Government will ensure the promotion of orderly growth for the economic health and safety of its citizens.

A Message from Your County Administrator

Fellow Citizens:

I am pleased to present Leon County's Highlights and Accomplishments report for 2003-2004. This document highlights our successes in improving the quality of life for citizens through the provision of cost-effective and exemplary government services. The County Commission is committed to maintaining low property taxes while providing quality public services. Leon County Government remains efficient, and citizens can expect to receive the superior services they deserve.

This past year was one of our most challenging in recent history with the creation of a County-run Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department. A dedicated team developed an exceptional system that I believe will be a model program in EMS. Leon County EMS is dedicated to preserving life, improving health and promoting safety. Citizens are receiving the highest quality emergency medical care available and they can be proud of the system in place.

Progress has been made in the area of solid waste with the opening of a state-of-the-art transfer station that accepts all of the County's household garbage before it is transferred to a landfill in Jackson County. In addition, the landfill ceased burying household garbage, and the County is reviewing plans to convert areas of the landfill into a park and recreational facility.

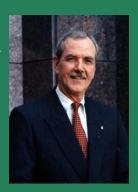
The Leon County Library system has also experienced much progress with the construction of the new Ft. Braden Branch Library and expanded library hours at all County branches. Library patrons can also conveniently access our library collection from the comfort of their home or office via the internet. The proposed fiscal year 2004-05 budget continues to build on our successes with funding for the Lake Jackson Branch Library.

Leon County continues to experience strong property tax growth which will allow the County to continue to expand and improve services. The Board of County Commissioners will approve the 2004-05 budget in September.

I hope you will find this document informative. I welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to better serve you.

Parwez Alam County Administrator Leon County Board of County Commissioners

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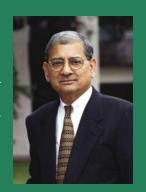
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Board of County Commissioners Priorities for 2003/2004

Water Quality/Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Standards

 Develop a program to measure the amount of pollutants entering water bodies and implement new regulations to comply with and enforce federal and state standards.

Joint Dispatch/Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

 Pursue the development of a Leon County/Tallahassee Joint Law Enforcement Dispatch/EOC.

(3) Leon County Charter Amendment

 Pursue Leon County Charter amendment to address Countywide stormwater issues.

Protection of North Florida Water Resources



(5) Economic Development

 Maintain focus on recruitment and expansion of small businesses and job creation.

 Develop a performance contract with the Economic Development Council (EDC) to evaluate its progress in attracting new businesses.

6 Eliminate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU)

Women's Health Center on Southside

 Evaluate the need for a women's health center at the Bond Community Health Clinic.

8 Community/Teen Centers

 Extend Leon County's lease with the Leon County School Board for the Ft. Braden Community Center.

 Explore using schools for after-hours youth programs.

 Evaluate a dinner program for kids after school.

Funding for 90 East (Mahan Drive) to I-10

O Southern Strategy

 Involve the private sector in further developing the Southern Strategy to address housing, schools, and transportation.

 Explore the impact the FSU and FAMU Master Plans will have on Southside neighborhoods.



Emergency Medical Services

 On December 31, 2003, Leon County Government began providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Under the new system, the amount of time it



Leon County Emergency Medical Services

Preserving Life, Improving Health,
Promoting Safety

takes for an ambulance to get to citizens in an emergency is significantly less. The EMS system utilizes a system status management concept that allows for improved coverage and faster emergency response.

- Ambulances have been strategically placed Countywide with ambulances dedicated to the unincorporated areas, including Chaires, Ft. Braden, and Miccosukee.
- Medics are posted in their ambulances and simply put their trucks into gear when a call comes
 in, significantly reducing the amount of time it takes to get to an emergency scene. The
 average response time systemwide is seven minutes.
- In the first four months of operation, EMS responded to about 8,000 emergency calls.
- On April 1, 2004, EMS partnered with the Tallahassee Fire Department for the provision of Advanced Life Support (ALS), doubling the number of ALS units in the EMS system from eight to 16. ALS is the treatment of life-threatening medical emergencies using techniques including cardiac defibrillation and the administration of drugs intravenously.
- The new ALS provision allows ambulances to be posted in other areas of the City and County, expanding the coverage area for simultaneous emergency response.
- Much work and preparation went into developing the new EMS system. County staff planned and executed every detail including hiring personnel, purchasing ambulances and equipment, and building the facility.
- The Human Resources (HR) Division recruited hundreds of applicants for the new EMS department. HR processed the hiring and orientation of more than 90 employees, developed pay plans and job descriptions, and expanded insurance coverage to address the new risks associated with an EMS program.



The Public Information
Office produced a
30-minute video to
educate the public on
the new EMS system.
The video can be seen
on the County Website,
www.leoncountyfl.gov,
or the Leon County
Government Channel
16 each Tuesday.

Protecting Your Health and Safety



Animal Control

The Animal Control Division increased education programs on dog bite prevention. Over the last three years, more than 8,000 adults and children have attended dog bite prevention presentations.

Mosquito Control

The Mosquito Control Division enhanced education for citizens on mosquito control, personal protection and West Nile virus.

Stormwater Maintenance

The County Commission approved a Countywide Flooded Property Acquisition Program to purchase homes in unincorporated Leon County that have recurring flooding problems.

Solid Waste Management

Landfill

The Leon County landfill underwent several improvements including the construction of a vegetation berm and tree buffer along Highway 27. The County discontinued burying household trash at the landfill. Plans are also being finalized for the construction of several multi-purpose fields at the facility.

Transfer Station

Leon County opened the Solid Waste Transfer Station in March 2003. Instead of household garbage going to the landfill, it is taken to the facility and transferred to Jackson County.



Recycling

- Leon County expanded the recycling program to include all plastic bottles and containers such as shampoo or detergent bottles.
- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection awarded a grant that allows waste tires to be used as aggregate material in concrete products.
- Leon County partnered with Goodwill Industries to collect electronics and offer vocational training. Electronics that were being discarded by residents and businesses were refurbished and sold in Goodwill stores.
- The Recycling Division participated in numerous community events to promote recycling, including Earth Day, Hazardous Waste Round-up at the rural waste collection stations, Waste Tire Amnesty Day, and presentations at elementary schools.

Fire Service

• Five volunteer fire department sub-stations are in the process of being constructed. They are:

#29-Miccosukee

#30-Chaires/Capitola

#31-Lake lamonia

#32 & 33-Lake Talquin

Health & Human Services

- The Leon County Health
 Department relocated to the new
 Southside Health Clinic Facility
 located on West Orange Avenue.
- Construction of the Health Department Dental Clinic is in progress with completion set for October 2004.
- The Florida Department of Health awarded Leon County a \$40,000 grant for a Breast and Cervical Cancer program targeting middleage and African-American women





- Family planning clinics increased capacity by 100% following the transfer of primary healthcare responsibility to other clinics in the community.
- The County Commission approved a new program providing \$100,000 in tax credits to a developer of low-income, affordable rental housing, allowing for a subsidy for low-income renters.
- The Uninsured Healthcare Program enjoyed much success with almost 7,000 residents receiving medical care. More than 58,000 prescriptions were filled and more than 1,000 emergency visits avoided, resulting in a cost savings of \$11 million for citizens.
- Leon County and the American Red Cross provided disaster preparedness training to schools, communities and businesses, reaching 2,000 people each month.
- The Mobile Health Unit expanded its coverage area to include low income and rural areas of the community and provided medical assistance to 2,000 people in these areas.

Award-Winning Program

The Women, Infants and Children Nutrition program was the recipient of a Davis Productivity Award presented by Florida Tax Watch for excellence in management. The program provides supplemental nutritious foods for low and moderate income pregnant or postpartum women, and infants and children, in addition to nutrition education, counseling and other support services.



2003-2004 Infrastructure and Road Improvements





- Public Works completed Miccosukee Road Phase II project construction.
- County intersection improvements completed include: Maclay/Meridian, Fred George/ Mission, Gum/Capital Circle NW and Aenon Church/US 90.
- Orange Avenue and Buck Lake Road are undergoing improvements.
- Several Open-Graded Cold Mix (OGCM)
 road-paving projects are near completion.
 They include: E.W. Reeves Road, Cypress
 Point Road, Beth Page Road, Chaparral Road,
 Sunray Road, Church Street, and Firefly Street.
- Leon County completed emergency repairs to the ravine system on Talpeco Road, funded by a \$500,000 federal grant.
- The Tharpe Street Corridor Study is near completion and will improve traffic conditions, and improve the road for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Several studies were completed, including the Chaires Road Feasibility Study, Bicycle/ Pedestrian Master Plan, and Sidewalk Mapping Project.
- The Mahan Drive Corridor Study and plan for future land use development along the corridor are complete.
- Many Leon County streets renamed to avoid confusion for emergency responders.

LEGEND:

TL = Travel Lane

V = Landscape Verge

CG = 24" Type F Curb/

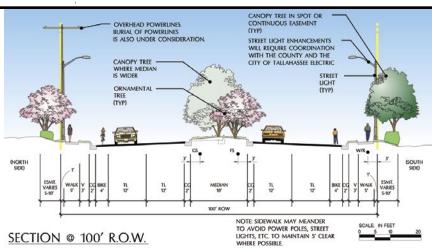
Gutter (18" Gutter Pan,

6" Curb Return)

W/R = Potable or Reuse Water NORTH NORTH

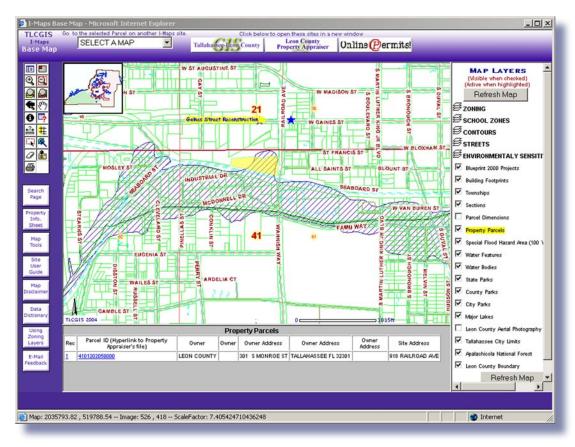
GS = Gravity Sewer

FS = Force Main (Sewer)



Enhancing County Services Through Technology

- Management Information Services implemented live broadcasts of commission meetings and workshops on the internet, as well as an archive of past meetings.
- The County's Website underwent improvements, including the development of an online job application system, online permitting, and online mapping.
- Leon County developed a consolidated property information page whereby vast information about a parcel of land is pulled from various databases and sources with a one-click request.



- The use of Global Positioning Satellite Units for Criminal Offender Tracking was enhanced.
- The Veterans Services Website was significantly expanded and updated, incorporating common issues and problem resolution areas with links to other agencies.
- The Canopy Road Website was expanded to improve public education and promote the Canopy Roads program.
- Maps of the County's historic sites are now available on the Website.
- The Center for Digital Government and Microsoft awarded Leon County with second place in the 2003 Digital Counties Survey.



Serving the Community

Parks & Recreation

- Citizen participation increased in all recreational programs, including a 19% increase in the football program and a 7% increase in the baseball program.
- Leon County Parks and Recreation implemented a new Challenger League Baseball and Soccer program for mentally and physically challenged youth.
- J.R. Alford Greenway was named a Great Florida Birding Trail site.
- Miccosukee Canopy Road Greenway underwent improvements, including additional signage to 17 miles of trails and adding a wooden bridge allowing for public access to the entire six-mile greenway.
- The cleanup project of the future Jackson View Park, including the removal of tons of illegally dumped garbage, invasive plant materials and underbrush, was completed.
- Construction of New Cypress Landing and picnic facilities is in progress.



Canopy Oaks Community Park

Parks and Recreation opened a new park in Northwest Leon County in April 2004. Canopy Oaks Community Park, next to Canopy Oaks Elementary, has two little league baseball fields, a multi-purpose field, tennis courts, a walking path, and a restroom/concession facility.

- The Design Development Plan and Report for the Lake Henrietta to Lake Munson portion of the Capital Cascades Greenway, in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land and Greenways Incorporated, is complete.
- Leon County planted more than 300 shade trees in County parks in 2003 and Spring 2004.
- Leon County planted 147 American hornbeam trees on residents' properties as part of the Adopt-A-Tree Program. This roadside beautification program has been in existence for 15 years and uses different Florida native trees each year.
- A new playground facility was installed at J. Lee Vause Park.





Serving the Community

Libraries

- The Ft. Braden Branch Library opened in Spring 2004 on schedule and under budget.
- The library system implemented electronic checkout, including reserving, renewing, or requesting library items online.
- Library patrons can now access a 24-hour online reference service called Ask-A-Libraries.
- Leon County expanded hours at all library branches.
- The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System was named winner of the Florida Library Association's 2004 Betty Davis Miller Award for Baby Time: A Storytime Program for Infants and Caregivers. The award recognizes outstanding direct library service to youth in Florida.



Extension Services

The Extension Service expanded educational opportunities for citizens, including parenting classes and a family nutrition program. Through the 4-H program, kids have enhanced their life skills in decision making, leadership, environmental stewardship, community and more.



Serving our Veterans

- The County Commission approved a grant for active duty military personnel in November 2003, providing \$100,000 to veterans who were mobilized and deployed in support of military operations. In the first six months of the program, 128 residents had qualified for assistance. It is the first program of its kind.
- Leon County supported construction of a World War II memorial in front of the courthouse, and a September 11, 2001 memorial in the courthouse rotunda.

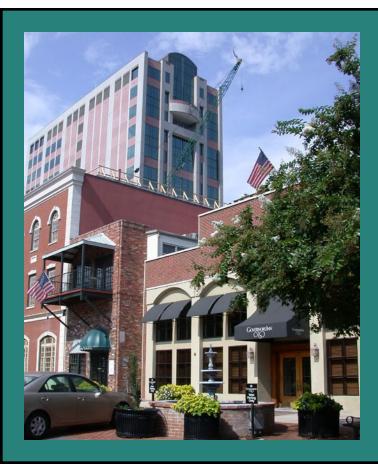
Volunteer Services

- VolunteerLEON and TCC partnered to provide the Volunteer Management Training Series in Spring 2004. This was the first Volunteer Center/Community College collaboration in Florida, offering a course on volunteer management and serving as a model for other communities. The model is being presented at the 2004 National Conference on Community Volunteering and National Service.
- VolunteerLEON's Youth Corps community-based, service-learning program model was recognized by the Florida Community/Higher Education/School/Partnership. The model will be utilized in seven Florida counties to set up similar programs that empower youth as leaders and open doors for youth to give back to the community through meaningful service.
- VolunteerLEON was presented with the first Annual Volunteer Management Excellence Award in partnership with the United Partners for Human Services.

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Economic Development and Improving Your Neighborhoods

- The **Southern Strategy Area Economic Development Plan** is underway and aims to diversify the economy, reduce poverty and unemployment, create more jobs, increase the tax base, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- Leon County has contracted with Strategic Planning Group (SPG) to perform a Market Feasibility Study of the North Florida Fairgrounds. The study will examine the potential redevelopment and relocation of the fairgrounds. A Citizen Advisory Committee has provided preliminary input on future land uses desired in the redevelopment of the site. SPG will be conducting focus groups and meeting with neighborhood groups, business and university officials to receive input on the project. The market feasibility study is scheduled for completion by October 2004.
- The South Monroe Sector Plan guides how this area should look in the future by contemplating
 the environmental connections, transportation needs and desires of the community. The plan
 includes streetscape improvements and the construction of a community park and stormwater
 facility.
- In an effort to continue its commitment to improve neighborhoods, the Board approved **neighborhood revitalization** plans for the Apalachee Ridge and Providence neighborhoods and implemented several projects to address residents' concerns.



Community Redevelopment

Big changes are in store for downtown Tallahassee thanks to a redevelopment tool called a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). The County and City Commissions approved a plan that will revitalize and enhance downtown through infrastructure and development improvements, such as the building a performing arts center, a parking garage, additional office and retail space, and residential housing.

Protecting Your Quality of Life and the Environment

The County negotiated and approved five settlement agreements involving groups within the Bradfordville area: The Bradfordville/Phipps, the Centerville Rural Community Association, the Killearn Lakes Homeowners' Association, the Lake McBride Area Residents' Association, and most recently the Lake Carolyn Homeowners' Association. In addition, the Board sold the former Lauder property.

The Woodville Recharge Study, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, identified sources of pollution to the aquifer and developed strategies to maximize the protection of this valuable water source.

The County Commission approved an ordinance regulating the citing of broadcast towers to prevent unsightly structures from being constructed in neighborhoods.

As part of the Commission's continued focus on protecting water quality, Leon County continues to monitor area lakes and the Ochlockonee River to identify water quality problems.

The County Attorney's Office and outside counsel are continuing to work with the City of Cairo to determine whether the illegal discharges from the Cairo sewage treatment operations can be remedied through negotiation rather than litigation. An investigation revealed that Cairo has been illegally discharging very large amounts of sewage wastewater into the Ochlockonee River and as it flows into Florida from Georgia, is leading to increased pollution of Leon County's lakes, specifically Lakes Talquin and lamonia.

Leon County's Financial Snapshot

- The Countywide millage rate has been reduced or remained stable every year for the past eleven years.
- Leon County has the eighth lowest per capita budget in a survey of 57 out of 67 Florida counties and Leon County has the lowest compared to surrounding counties.
- Leon County has approximately 43% of its property tax base exempt from taxation which ranks 22nd highest over all Florida counties; second most within the comparable counties, and fourth most within the surrounding counties.
- Leon County provided \$343,212 in tax exemptions during fiscal year 2003-04 to more than 1,900 low-income senior citizens.
- The County eliminated the Fire Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU).
- The County appropriated \$1 million for Sheriff's Office salary adjustments in fiscal year 2003-04.
- The County received the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting every year since 1996.

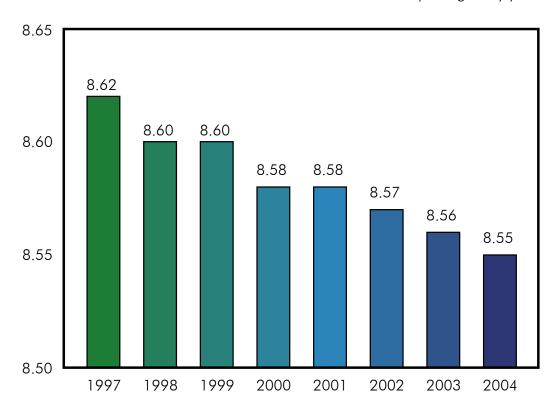
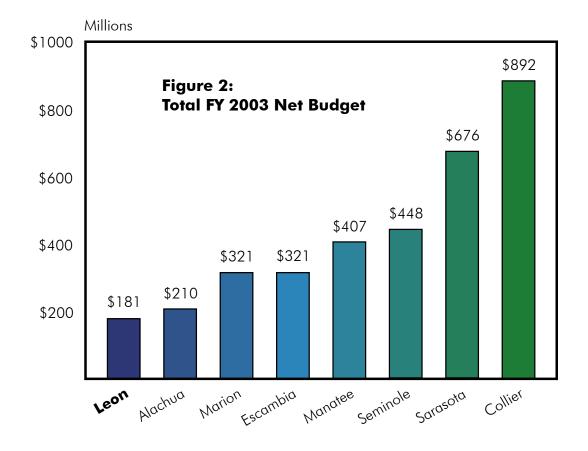
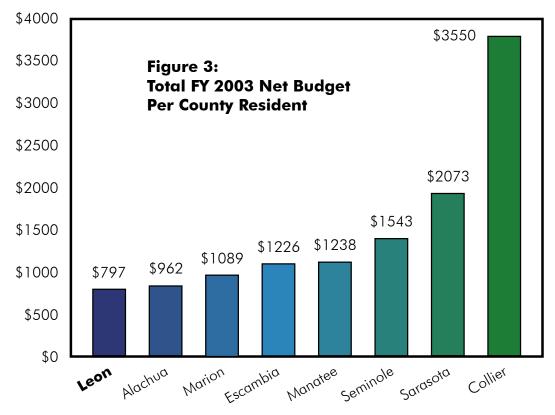


Figure 1: Countywide Millage Rates

Leon County's general property tax rate is currently 8.55 mills. In Leon County, one mill equals one dollar for every one thousand dollars of taxable property value. For example, a homesteaded residential home assessed at \$125,000 would pay \$855.





Leon County Government Directory

*Access all Leon County department and division websites at www.leoncountyfl.gov.

Animal Control 487-3172

Board of County Commissioners 488-4710 www.leoncountyfl.gov

Cooperative Extension 487-3004 http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/

County Administrator 488-9962

County Attorney 487-1008

County Probation 487-3563

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) 488-0911

Engineering Services 488-8003

Facilities Management 488-1948

Fleet Management 487-3075

Growth & Environmental Management 488-9300

Health and Human Services 488-7790

Health Department 488-3003 http://www.co.leon.fl.us/lchd/ Housing Services 488-7790

Human Resources 487-2220

Intergovernmental Affairs 488-9962

LeRoy Collins Leon County
Public Library System

Main Branch 487-2665
Dr. B.L. Perry, Jr. Branch 487-1815
Ft. Braden Branch 414-0902
Lake Jackson Branch 488-2665
Northeast Branch 921-1776
Parkway Branch 487-1926

Management Information Services 488-5813

Minority/Women Business Enterprise 488-7509

Mosquito Control and Stormwater Maintenance 487-3174

Office of Management and Budget 488-9775

Operations 487-3070

Parks and Recreation 488-0221

Planning 891-8600

Public Information 488-9962

Purchasing 488-6949 Solid Waste 487-2890

Tourist Development Council 488-3990 http://www.seetallahassee.com/

Transportation Systems Office 488-8003

VolunteerLeon 921-3015

Constitutional Officers

Clerk of the Circuit Court

577-4000 http://www.clerk.leon.fl.us/

Property Appraiser

488-6102

http://www.co.leon.fl.us/propappr/

Sheriff

922-3300 http://lcso.leonfl.org/

Supervisor of Elections

488-1350 www.leonfl.org/elect

Tax Collector

488-4735

http://www.leontaxcollector.net/

Judicial

Circuit Court Second Judicial 577-4300

County Court 577-4400